

# Africo-American Presbyterian

"AND YE SHALL KNOW THE TRUTH. AND THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—John viii. 32.

VOL. LV.

CHARLOTTE, N. C., THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 1934.

NO. 9.

## SHOULD INDUSTRIAL TRAINING BE GIVEN IN OUR SCHOOLS

By Rev. H. W. McNair, Nicholasville, Ky.

(An address delivered at the Workers' Conference held in the University Church at Johnson C. Smith University, Feb. 6-9.)

The question has been raised as to whether industrial work should be longer offered in our schools. Some of our public school officials in order to cut down on their school budgets have been listing this work among the frills of education. The question which I wish to raise here is: Shall our Church fall in the band wagon with public school officials, or shall she keep on training the young which come under her care according to their needs? To my mind nothing is more practical than the so-called industrial arts if they are presented in the proper way.

What I mean by in the proper way is, there must not be a makeshift. In other words, the work must exist in actuality and not on paper alone. It must be taught by those prepared to teach the subjects. As one has said, "A little learning is a dangerous thing; drink deep!" This applies to industrial knowledge as well as to knowledge along other lines.

While it is not my purpose to minimize the literary subjects taught in our schools, may I say that there are boys and girls who will never make their mark in life and be an asset to society if the literary subjects are pursued alone; but if trained along industrial lines they will soar to the stars and mount the summits and wave the imperial toga.

Vocational guidance is not a myth as some would have you believe. It is helping the youth to find himself or herself. The modern age has seen the folly of trying to make a boy or girl do that for which they have no aptitude. It is also folly for the schools fostered by our Church to deny a chance to those who ought to be trained along industrial lines. Of course, scattered all over the great Southland as our schools are, consideration must be given to the kinds of industries each school should offer.

Just here it may be of interest to you to know what are some of the conditions that exist in my State, the great State of Kentucky, in respect to the colored people along industrial lines. This finding is the finding of a commission sent out by the State Department of Kentucky, and your humble servant was one of the ten colored members placed on the commission. It has to do with the need for industrial training for colored people. It gives the number of colored people engaged in industrial pursuits but poorly trained to render efficient service.

The report goes on to say that it will be noted that 33.8 per cent of the Negro workers earn a living in domestic and personal service; 13.5 per cent in manufacturing and mechanical industries; 8.2 per cent in transportation; 7.5 per cent in extraction of minerals; and 5.4 per cent in trades. These groups include 68.4 per cent, or more than two-thirds of the Negro workers of the State; yet there is hardly a public school in the State where they can be trained for any of these pursuits.

I give you this data to show you what an awful plight our youth will be in if our schools should close the door of industrial training in their faces. While this finding is the finding of one State, I believe I am safe in saying that similar conditions exist in almost all other Southern States.

Industrial courses are more necessary now than formerly.

The home is not what it was once. Many of the functions of the home must of necessity be transferred to the schools if we are to continue in the onward march. Many children do not know what it is to be in a home where such virtues as honesty, industry and other common virtues are emphasized, and I might add that because of many conditions which obtain not only in the industrial centers, but in the farming regions as well, it seems to me that we will lose our opportunity of doing some real service for humanity if we drop our industrial work in our boarding schools.

The only home training that many of our people will get will be in our boarding schools. Many thus trained will be an asset, who otherwise will be a liability.

It seems to me that in view of existing conditions, our industrial work should be expanded rather than curtailed. The three "Rs" will no longer suffice in modern society.

I am a believer in democracy. I believe that every individual should have equal opportunity; that is, an opportunity to develop according to his gifts and capacity. There is as much cultural value in some of the industrial arts as in some of the abstract subjects. Shall we deprive the individual who has mechanical genius an opportunity to develop? What is needed is not curtailment of our industrial work, but its expansion. This is an opportunity for our Church to do some real tangible missionary work. Let us still be the good Samaritan. Let's still continue to look after man's social needs as well as his spiritual needs.

### MOST VALUABLE PEOPLE

(From The Presbyterian)

We do not hesitate to state from our observation that regular church attendants are, as a rule, the most valuable people in any community. Look about and see if this be not true. As a rule, church-going people are industrious and rarely are forced to the "bread line" even in these hard days, when everybody is a loser. Church attendants form the moral backbone of any place, city, village or rural district. With now and then an exception, church-goers keep free from drinking, gambling and sexual vices. Church attendants are the most generous in giving of money and labor to aid worthy causes. Observation will show that regular church attendants are most careful in conduct and seldom fall into evil ways. A good churchman has a much larger influence than his neglectful neighbor. We have spent many years in one place, and we say these things from actual observation. One political boss in a city of about 100,000 gave us this testimony: "I always go to church because I know I can do more for my city by the practice." He never failed to be there while health permitted. Not all church-goers are perfectly righteous, but no one can go regularly without gaining advantages which will not be gained in other ways. We never knew a neglecter of church worship who did not degenerate in some ways in the course of years. It is good to go to church. The best people in your community are always there.

## RACE INSULTS

By Dr. Kelly Miller

Several years ago I had a Japanese student in one of my classes. In course of discussion I had occasion to refer to the "Japs" as the foremost branch of the non-white races in the world arena. I did this perfectly simplicit, using, as I supposed, the abbreviated form instead of the full name by which the yellow yankees are usually designated. Upon adjournment of class my Japanese student approached me in a very polite manner and courteously reminded me that that term was very offensive to members of his race, and was as objectionable to them as "Nigger" is to the American citizen of African descent. He assured me that he felt sure that I had no such intent, but that he merely wished to let me know the sensitiveness of his race on that point. This gentle caution reminded me always to be very careful in the use even casually of such terms as "Chink," "Dago" and "Sheeny" as applied to racial groups. Such epithets might be opprobrious to them and wound their just sensibilities.

The Negro is particularly sensitive concerning any racial designation which differentiates him from the great body of the American people. All such terms as "Colored," "Negro" and "Afro-American" carry with them connotations of inferiority. The Chicago Defender has vainly striven to abolish all such terms from its columns, and to substitute the awkward and meaningless term "Race men" where such designation is necessary. But I do not think that many serious publishers, publicists, writers or speakers have any scruples about using any one of the three designations where racial distinction becomes necessary. My own method is to use these terms as synonyms, using the one or the other, whichever may seem most appropriate under the circumstances. The colored race 'universally regards such terms as "Nigger," "Darkey," and "Coon" as insulting and calculated to belittle and demean. Members of the race often use such terms in a playful or jocular way but would feel mortally offended when the white man uses them. I recall riding in a racially separate coach through Virginia. An ill-mannered youngster was smoking a cigar. The conductor came through and ordered him to cease smoking, saying: "Don't you see ladies in this car?" The vulgar response was: "I don't see no ladies; there is nobody in here but nigger women." Such ugly incidents as this too often confirm and justify the white man in characterizing the race by offensive epithets.

Very often leading, well meaning publications use such terms, simplicit, as I did in the case of my Japanese student. I recall that my late friend and colleague, Dean George W. Cook, in a written complaint, called President Theodore Roosevelt to book for using the term "Darkey" in one of his articles. Mr. Roosevelt responded that the race is too sensitive, that he himself was often called "Dutey" and thought nothing of it.

Will Rogers has recently been widely denounced in the colored press for using "Nigger" in his broadcast. When called to account he disclaimed his insulting intention, but used the word "Darkey" in his explanation. The verbiage of his explanation proved as objectionable as the original offense. Nobody who has followed the method of this good-natured fun-maker

could believe that in either instance, he intended to reflect upon or insult the race. He was merely indulging his vernacular. The racial objection, however, is justifiable, however simplicit might have been the author's indulgence in these terms. To allow such terms to pass current without remonstrance would belittle and degrade the race in the eyes of the supercilious white world.

The most unpardonable epithet that can be applied to an opponent is the phrase which identifies him with the canine species through his maternal descent; and yet this has become a playful epithet often passed between friends wholly void of offensive intent. At the recent banquet of the Gridiron Club in Washington, at which the President and the highest officials were guests, "S. O. B." was added to the alphabetic list of initials by which the new administration has designated public activities. The term has gained acceptable usage even in polite male society.

It is the inferiority complex that makes the Negro sensitive to racial taunts and jibes when used by the white man. Group insults run from the superior to the inferior, and not contrariwise. Some one has said that "no gentleman will insult me; no others can." It is none else than Shakespeare who declares that "The eagle suffers little wrens to sing and is not careful what they mean thereby." A man can easily insult the sensitive female species, but she male pays little heed to the feminine abuse. The white race cares little or nothing about what the Negroes may call them or say about them, but the Negro is keenly sensitive of the white man's jibes and epithets, even where there is no insulting intent. The dependent position of the Negro keeps him forever on the alert defensive in behalf of his racial reputation and good name. Eternal vigilance is the price of race self-respect.

### MARY ALLEN JUNIOR COLLEGE OBSERVES NEGRO HISTORY WEEK

Negro History Week, February 12-16, was observed at Mary Allen Junior College with appropriate exercises. Each morning members of the History Club read to the student body papers setting forth the Negro in history and emphasizing his influence on the development of American civilization.

On the evening of February twelfth, birthday of Lincoln the great Emancipator, representatives from the various classes delivered orations covering the developments in Negro History since the signing of the Emancipation Proclamation. This indeed marked an epoch in American history in that it not only ended the cruelty of slavery but presented to the nation another problem, perhaps greater, the absorption of four million liberated people into the social and economic life of the United States. This situation was well described in the following orations: "The Negro in Business," "The New Day," "The Negro's Debt to the Union," and "Abraham Lincoln, the Man with a Vision."

One notable feature of the evening was the offering of two hundred dollars given by the students, faculty and friends of the institution for the work of the Presbyterian Board of Missions in Negro education. This annual contribution helps

(Continued on page 3)

## PLAN OF PRISON REFORM PROPOSED BY SOUTHERN CHURCH LEADERS

Savannah, Ga., February 16, when they shoot down fleeing prisoners.

Rt. Rev. Frederick F. Reese, Episcopal Bishop of Georgia, issued today from the Episcopal office in Savannah a statement and appeal from religious leaders to the people of the South, urging abolition of the chain gang and a more humane and redemptive treatment of all prisoners. The appeal is signed by sixty well known religious leaders of the South, including bishops, ministers, editors of religious papers, Presidents of church colleges, and denominational officials.

The joint statement of the Southern churchmen points out that the chain gang still exists in three Southern States, that most county jails are breeding places of crime, that prisoners are often cruelly punished by untrained guards, and that the "sweat box" still exists.

In their statement the churchmen protest against political control of jails and prisons and advocate a system of probation and also the consolidation and State control of jails. They put forth a fourteen point platform of principles as a guide for the treatment of offenders.

The text of the statement is as follows:

"In no other particular is the application of the Christian principles of our civilization more necessary than in the treatment of our prisoners. The Christian point of view is the sacredness of every human life and the restoration of the erring. In spite of the progress of the redemptive principle in dealing with offenders as shown by the multiplication of juvenile courts, reformatories, the probation system and the scientific treatment of the individual delinquent, the idea of the punishment instead of the reclamation of the offender is still deeply imbedded in the public mind, in the procedure of the courts, in the housing of prisoners and in the administration of our jails and prisons.

The situation gives rise to serious consequences and sometimes to shocking brutalities of which the people are only on occasion made aware. They are confined to no portion of the country. The county jails and most prisons are anti-social institutions, badly out of date, and breeders of crime. In the North most prisoners live in idleness; in the South they are saved from that calamity. The majority of prisons, especially those with old time cell blocks, are inhumane. They are sometimes fire traps and have been the occasion of frightful loss of the lives of helpless prisoners.

"There is no question but that our Southern States are relatively backward in their treatment of crime and prisoners, especially of Negro prisoners. The chain gang system exists nowhere else in the nation except in a few Southern States.

"Prisoners are sometimes inhumanely punished by guards who are unfitted by training for their tasks. Food is often unbalanced and unpalatable. Road gangs of prisoners in two or three States are still caged and chained at night in hot and unsanitary steel wagons after a hard day's work. They are sometimes shot down or chased by hounds if they attempt to escape. This is not necessary for they seldom escape recapture. Their health is not sufficiently protected in many jails and road camps. They usually receive no wages, or only a pittance for luxuries. Their hours of work are unnecessarily long. Prisoners in some States are armed as guards and rewarded

"These are not meant to be blanket charges against all our Southern States but they obtain in particular States. Others, as for example, North Carolina, have re-organized their penal systems. Alabama has gotten rid of forced labor in her coal mines. Florida and Alabama have established sanitary road camps and do not chain prisoners. Georgia has abolished flogging and leasing of prisoners to private corporations, but retains the chain gang, sweat box, stocks, and the county system. There are model prisons and reformatories in increasing numbers; but as yet the fundamental evil of exploitation of the prisoner for profit, either directly by the State or by leasing to private corporations, still remains in a few States. The office of sheriff is still a political job and the same is true of wardens and guards in our prisons. The fee system in counties tends to corrupt officials, and sacrifices the welfare of the prisoner. Political control usually ends in graft and other forms of corruption.

"We feel it our duty, as spiritual shepherds of our Southland, to protest against these evils. We appeal to governors and legislators of States in which the chain gang system still obtains, to abolish the system, and to enact laws and to put them into effect, which shall finally recast the entire penal system of these States in accordance with the Christian principles of the sacredness of personality and the recovery of the delinquent. These prisoners whom we now still dishonor and exploit are such as those of whom Christ spoke when he said, 'I was in prison and ye came unto me.'

"Specifically, we offer the following platform of principles, now well established in dealing with crime, as a guide for the treatment of offenders. We ask all citizens to ponder them long and deeply:

"1. The consistent object and guiding principle in handling prisoners should be the protection of society by the reclamation of the criminal. It is to the interest of society that this shall be done, since the criminal will return after a while to society.

"2. Imprisonment, while necessary under present conditions, is degrading to the prisoner and his family and costly to the taxpayer. A large percentage of all convicted persons might be safely paroled under the care of trained probation officers, at great economy to the State and advantage to the prisoner. Slightly over one half of all Federal prisoners are now out on parole under probation officers. The indeterminate sentence and suspended sentence are a necessary part of a progressive penal code.

"3. A trained probation service is needed in every State in the South. It should be organized on a country-wide basis with a state supervisory bureau. Every criminal court should have the service of such officers, women as well as men, and there should be colored officers, trained for the purpose in colored schools, to deal with colored offenders.

"4. Juvenile offenders, at least to the age of 16 and preferably 13, should not be imprisoned or brought before courts having criminal jurisdiction, but before juvenile courts where the procedure is not criminal but is based upon social treatment, and where the delinquent is placed under the care of proba-

(Continued on page 4)